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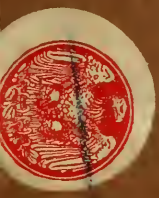

CANDLES THAT BURN

ALINE KILMER

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CANDLES THAT BURN

ALINE KILMER

CANDLES THAT BURN

BY

ALINE KILMER

NEW YORK
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

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1919

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TO

JOYCE

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CANDLES THAT BURN

CANDLES THAT BURN

AMBITION

Kenton and Deborah, Michael and Rose,
These are fine children as all the world knows;
But into my arms in my dreams every night
Come Peter and Christopher, Faith and Delight.

Kenton is tropical, Rose is pure white,
Deborah shines like a star in the night;
Michael's round eyes are as blue as the sea,
And nothing on earth could be dearer to me.

But where is the baby with Faith can compare?
What is the colour of Peterkin's hair?
Who can make Christopher clear to my sight,
Or show me the eyes of my daughter Delight?

When people inquire I always just state:
"I have four nice children and hope to have eight.
Though the first four are pretty and certain to please,
Who knows but the rest may be nicer than these?"

THE MOTHER'S HELPER

I love all my children far more than I thought to;
They do everything just the way that they ought to,
And the ones that can talk say their prayers as they're
taught to;
But still every night as I sit at my sewing,
My mind turned adrift on its own pleasures going,
Underneath my wild thoughts is a steady prayer flowing:
St. Brigid, please keep
My babies asleep!

St. Rita assists me when things are past bearing,
St. Christopher helps me when forth I am faring,
But the care of my children St. Brigid is sharing.
They are wilful and happy and dear beyond measure,
No riches could equal the worth of my treasure;
But in spite of my love and my pride and my pleasure,
St. Brigid, please keep
My babies asleep!

A DIDACTIC POEM TO DEBORAH

Deborah dear, when you are old,
  Tired and grey, with pallid brow,
Where will you put the blue and gold
  And radiant rose that tint you now?

You are so fair, so gay, so sweet!
  How can I bear to watch you grow,
Knowing that soon those twinkling feet
  Must go the ways all children go?

Deborah, put the blue and gold
  And rosy beauty that is you,
Into your heart that it may hold
  Beauty to last your whole life through.

Then, though the world be tossed and torn,
  Greyer than ashes and as sad,
Though fate may make your way forlorn,
  Deborah dear, you shall be glad.

AN AUTUMN WALK WITH DEBORAH

Over the limp and sallow grasses,
  Deborah, will you walk with me?
You may gather gentians in purple masses
  And honeypods from the locust tree.

Brown leaves cover the partridge berry,
  Holding it safe for your eager hand.
Barberry bright and cornelian cherry
  Offering scarlet jewels stand.

I shall dress you up as an elf-queen, twining
  Bittersweet wreaths for your golden head;
Your leaf-brown cloak with its orange lining
  I shall hang with garlands yellow and red.

Let us leave this place while the sunlight lingers
  Lest the elves should covet your beauty bright.
The gentians fall from your tired fingers
  As I carry you home through the fading light.

EXPERIENCE

Deborah danced, when she was two,
As buttercups and daffodils do;
Spirited, frail, naïvely bold,
Her hair a ruffled crest of gold,
And whenever she spoke her voice went singing
Like water up from a fountain springing.

But now her step is quiet and slow;
She walks the way primroses go;
Her hair is yellow instead of gilt,
Her voice is losing its lovely lilt,
And in place of her wild, delightful ways
A quaint precision rules her days.

For Deborah now is three, and oh,
She knows so much that she did not know.

CANDLES THAT BURN

Candles that burn for a November birthday,
Wreathed round with asters and with goldenrod,
As you go upward in your radiant dying
Carry my prayer to God.

Tell Him she is so small and so rebellious,
Tell Him her words are music on her lips,
Tell Him I love her in her wayward beauty
Down to her fingertips.

Ask Him to keep her brave and true and lovely,
Vivid and happy, gay as she is now,
Ask Him to let no shadow touch her beauty,
No sorrow mar her brow.

All the sweet saints that came for her baptising,
Tell them I pray them to be always near.
Ask them to keep her little feet from stumbling,
Her gallant heart from fear.

Candles that burn for a November birthday,
Wreathed round with asters and with goldenrod,
As you go upward in your radiant dying,
Carry my prayer to God.

PREVISION

I know you are too dear to stay;
  You are so exquisitely sweet:
My lonely house will thrill some day
  To echoes of your eager feet.

I hold your words within my heart,
  So few, so infinitely dear;
Watching your fluttering hands I start
  At the corroding touch of fear.

A faint, unearthly music rings
  From you to Heaven—it is not far!
A mist about your beauty clings
  Like a thin cloud before a star.

My heart shall keep the child I knew,
  When you are really gone from me,
And spend its life remembering you
  As shells remember the lost sea.

DOROTHY'S GARDEN

Dear, in all your garden I have planted yellow lilies,
Dainty yellow lilies everywhere you go:
They are nodding slim and stately down the paths along the hedges,
Delicately stepping they curtsey in a row.

So when you walk among them like a lily in your slimness,
With your shining head just bending graciously,
All the little angels that look down upon your garden
Will wonder which is lily and which is Dorothy.

JUSTICE

Michael, come in! Stop crying at the door.
Come in and see the evil you have done.
Here is your sister's doll with one leg gone,
Naked and helpless on the playroom floor.
"Poor child! poor child! now he can never stand.
With one leg less he could not even sit!"
She mourned, but first, with swift avenging hand,
She smote, and I am proud of her for it.

Michael, my sympathies are all for you.
Your cherub mouth, your miserable eyes,
Your grey-blue smock tear-spattered and your cries
Shatter my heart, but what am I to do?
He was her baby and the fear of bears
Lay heavy on him so he could not sleep
But in the crook of her dear arm, she swears.
So, Michael, she was right and you must weep.

FOR TWO BIRTHDAYS

Whenever I light the candles for your birthday
My memory lights two more,
Two ghostly candles burning with your candles
Where hers burned once before.

Whenever I see you at your birthday table,
Across from you I see
A gentle ghost that sits among us laughing,
Laughing adorably.

She would have been the gayest at the party,
She always was the gladdest thing on earth:
Now she is gayer still, for she is taken
Into celestial mirth.

With God and all the saints and all the angels
She shares her birthday cake.
So let us keep your birthday candles burning
Joyously, for her sake.

TO ROSE AWAY

Little white moon of my heart
  Since you have gone away
I miss your cry when you wake by night,
  Your smile when you wake by day.
I am glad when the daylight fades
  For my dreams are lovely things;
Then in the dark you come to me
  On softly fluttering wings.

When in the afternoon,
  Sailing the cloudless sky,
Over the shimmering summer earth
  The pale little moon slips by,
In the curve of her frail white bow
  Your shadowy face I see,
And I like to think that she has you there
  Bringing you back to me.

FOR A PROUD BABY

Flower of children, if you knew
  All the things you *might* be proud of!
Curls and dimples are a few
  Charms you have a gracious crowd of.

With your dark, delightful eyes
  You can break a heart or mend it.
I know you are not really wise,
  But how well you can pretend it!

Though your wickedness and wit
  Very clever in your sight be,
Yet you are not, I admit,
  As conceited as you might be.

"YOU ARE MORE BLESSED"

You are more blessed than other babies are:
  Your shining eyes grow brighter every day
With radiance that reminds me of the star
  That showed where Jesus lay.

I like to think that you are set apart,
  A flower that never sprang from earthly loam,
A rose of Heaven that nestles in my heart
  And dreams about its home.

TO A SICK CHILD

I would make you cookies
  But you could not eat them;
I would bring you roses
  But you would not care.
In your scornful beauty,
  Arrogant and patient,
Though I'd die to please you
  You lie silent there.

Your once wanton sister
  Creeps about on tiptoe,
And your brother hurries
  At your slightest nod:
Watching at your bedside
  When you sleep I tremble
Lest before you waken
  You go back to God.

"A WIND IN THE NIGHT"

A wind rose in the night,
(She had always feared it so!)
Sorrow plucked at my heart
And I could not help but go.

Softly I went and stood
By her door at the end of the hall.
Dazed with grief I watched
The candles flaring and tall.

The wind was wailing aloud:
I thought how she would have cried
For my warm familiar arms
And the sense of me by her side.

The candles flickered and leapt,
The shadows jumped on the wall.
She lay before me small and still
And did not care at all.

"WHEN YOU HAD BEEN DEAD"

When you had been dead a week
I entered a shining shop,
And there in a neat pink row
Lay little dolls made of soap.
And I thought, "I will take one home.
How she will laugh to see it!
How it will bob in her bath
And slip through her dripping fingers!"
Only a moment I smiled.
Only a moment I dreamed it.
Then my heart stood still with pain
And I went out into the darkness.

TO ROSE

They told me the one who died would be always near me,
That I had one child who could never grow old and sad;
I should always have your beautiful face to cheer me,
Your voice to make me glad.

Oh, I have prayed till my heart was weary with praying,
Hoping, if only in dreams, to feel you near,
To find the truth in what they were always saying—
That you would be with me, dear.

Were they only trying to help me face the morrow?
Or did they really believe the things they said?
The only dream I have had of you brought but sorrow:
I dreamed that you were not dead.

OLIM MEMINISSE JUVABIT

Sometime it may be pleasing to remember
The curls about your brow,
To talk about your eyes, your smile, your dearness,
But it is anguish now.

Often I feel that I must speak and tell them
Of all your golden ways,
How all the words you ever spoke were happy,
Joy-filled your laughing days.

But though I miss you every empty moment
Of all my longing years,
How can I speak about your thrilling beauty
When all my thoughts are tears?

Sometime it may be pleasing to remember
The curls about your brow,
The way you turned your head, your hands, your laughter,
But oh, not now, not now!

HAUNTED

Your dying lips were proud and sweet
And when you turned your head away
Against the pillow where you lay
My heart was broken at your feet.
O quivering lips that would be gay,
What was it that you tried to say?
There was a thing you would have said,
There was a word you never spoke;
It rose between us by your bed.
There came a look of hurt surprise
In your unfathomable eyes,
And then it was that my heart broke.

So now wherever I may turn
I see your wistful, following eyes;
I see that anguished question burn
On lips that laugh in Paradise.
If I had been in your dear place
You never would have failed me so!
You always read upon my face

Thoughts that myself could scarcely know.
Oh, how I scorned my fettered soul
Because it could not leap the space
That held me from your lovely goal!

How many a trivial little word
And things you said to me apart,
Strange sayings no one else has heard,
I keep safe buried in my heart.
But the last thing you would have said,
I shall not know it: you are dead.

THE WINDY NIGHT

You say you love to hear the wind
  Like brazen trumpets in the night;
That all its martial panoply
  Wakes in your soul a wild delight.

You like to hear upon the roof
  The silver lances of the rain,
And see the birches' cavalry
  Go sweeping past the window-pane:

To see tall chestnuts fall like towers,
  While all our happy house is still,
And like a charge with bayonets
  The cedar trees rush up the hill.

But I lie trembling in the night,
  As dark and wild as night can be,
Remembering songs that you have made
  Till through the night you come to me.

I SHALL NOT BE AFRAID

I shall not be afraid any more,
  Either by night or day;
What would it profit me to be afraid
  With you away?

Now I am brave. In the dark night alone
  All through the house I go,
Locking the doors and making windows fast
  When sharp winds blow.

For there is only sorrow in my heart;
  There is no room for fear.
But how I wish I were afraid again,
  My dear, my dear!

IN SPRING

I do not know which is worse when you are away:
  Long grey days with the lisping sound of the rain
And then when the lilac dusk is beginning to fall
  The thought that perhaps you may never come back
    again;

Or days when the world is a shimmer of blue and gold,
  Sparkling newly all in the dear spring weather,
When with a heart that is torn apart by pain
  I walk alone in ways that we went together.

HIGH HEART

The sea that I watch from my window
Is grey and white;
I see it toss in the darkness
All the night.
My soul swoops down to sorrow
As the sea-gulls dip,
And all my love flies after
Your lonely ship.

Yet I am not despairing
Though we must part,
Nothing can be too bitter
For my high heart.
All in the dreary midnight,
Watching the flying foam,
I wait for the golden morning
When you come home.

CHRISTMAS

"And shall you have a Tree," they say,
"Now one is dead and one away?"

Oh, I shall have a Christmas Tree!
Brighter than ever it shall be;
Dressed out with coloured lights to make
The room all glorious for your sake.
And under the Tree a Child shall sleep
Near shepherds watching their wooden sheep.
Threads of silver and nets of gold,
Scarlet bubbles the Tree shall hold,
And little glass bells that tinkle clear.
I shall trim it alone but feel you near.

And when Christmas Day is almost done,
When they all grow sleepy one by one,
When Kenton's books have all been read,
When Deborah's climbing the stairs to bed,

I shall sit alone by the fire and see
Ghosts of you both come close to me.
For the dead and the absent always stay
With the one they love on Christmas Day.

THE GARDEN CHILD

Once in my childhood I knew an old garden,
Shut in by grey pickets and crowded with grass;
Old flowers grew in it, clove pinks and white lilies,
And moss roses choked up the path with their mass.

It lay all alone in the curve of a river
Where little grey boats floated by on the tide;
No dwelling was near it, no pathway led to it,
And harsh river-grasses crept up on each side.

Speedwell and lavender, small brown chrysanthemums,
Mixed in great tangles where myrtle ran wild,
And sweetly mysterious, safe though unguarded,
Lay hid in a corner the grave of a child.

Often I wondered if that child had played there,
Played there as I, twining wreaths for my hair,
When the pickets were white and the flowers were tended
And no little grave held its mystery there.

Who were the people who once had lived near there
Making the wilderness bloom like a rose,
Then left like a dream leaving nothing behind them
But the grave of a child in a small garden-close?

THE LOST FOREST

I walked with my mother
Where the tall trees grow,
And she showed me tiny tables
Where the elves sit in a row,
And the bells that ring to call them
When the night winds blow.

There were small frosted toadstools,
And little cups of wine,
And velvet banks to rest on
Where moss grew thick and fine,
And a smooth brown ring for dancing
Underneath a pine.

But now when I go walking
All the way is clear;
The little bells are silent
And the moss grown sere,
And I know that in the moonlight
Not an elf comes near.

COW SONG

Klang! Kling! the cow-bells ring
As the cows come home at night.
Slowly they pass over the grass,
Black and brown and white.

Sleepy and slow each one will go
With daisies and clover in her;
At the milking stall she'll give them all
As milk for Kenton's dinner.

REMEMBRANCE

I went back to a place I knew
  When I was very, very small;
The same old yellow roses grew
  Against the same old wall.

Each thing I knew was in its place;
  The well, the white stones by the road,
The box-hedge with its cobweb lace,
  And a small spotted toad.

And yet the place seemed changed and still;
  The house itself had shrunk, I know.
And then my eyes began to fill—
  For I had always loved it so!

FLOWER DANCERS

To-day I played with flowers,
The yellow, yellow daisies,
The rainbow morning-glories
  And lilies pale and grand.
They held their dainty skirts out,
They bowed among the grasses,
And danced a tilting minuet
  Shadowy hand in hand.

MORNING-GLORIES

When I was small I used to play
In an old garden bright with flowers.
I often used to run away
From home, and play in there for hours.

There were two ladies who lived there,
Dressed all in black with creamy laces.
They had soft snowy puffs of hair
And wrinkled, pleasant, dim old faces.

They had such kind and pretty ways!
They used to tell me lovely stories,
And let me on warm sunny days
Blow bubbles with great morning-glories.

I wonder if they know how much
I think of them now I am older.
I often seem to feel the touch
Of soft old hands upon my shoulder.

HILL-COUNTRY

Brown hill I have left behind,
  Why do you haunt me so?
You never were warm and kind
  And I was glad to go.

Is it because there lies,
  Up in your cold brown breast,
One who brought joy to my eyes
  And to my heart brought rest?

Never again shall I see
  The flash in her answering eye.
Never again shall the heart in me
  Stir as she passes by.

Hill, you are proud and cold,
  Haughty and high your face;
Is it, O hill, because you hold
  Her in your grim embrace?

COMPENSATION

I have two children: one who came
  When on my head
Life shed its joys without a thought
  Of pain or dread;
And one when ashes of despair
  Blackened my bread.

My child of joy has sombre eyes
  Like Mimer's well;
Surely the secrets of the world
  Those lips could tell;
And wisdom on his infant soul
  Untimely fell.

My child of woe has laughing eyes
  Like dancing light;
A leaping flame of innocence
  Has burned her white;
And in her face I dare not look,
  It is so bright.

My little pagan's life should hold
  Joy without taint;
Under the gleaming sword of pain
  His soul might faint:
Not all the powers of Hell could daunt
  My happy saint!

IN A HALL BEDROOM

"In the long border on the right
I shall plant larkspur first," she thinks.
"Peonies and chrysanthemums
And then sweet-scented maiden pinks.

"The border on the left shall hold
Nothing but masses of white phlox.
Forget-me-nots shall edge this one,
The one across be edged with box.

"The sun-dial in the centre stands.
There morning-glories bright shall twine.
And in the strip at either end
Shall grow great clumps of columbine.

"There is no garden in the world
So beautiful as mine," she dreams.
Rising, she walks the little space
To where her narrow window gleams.

She gazes through the dingy pane
To where the street is noisy still,
And tends with pitiable care
A tulip on the window-sill.

TO A YOUNG AVIATOR

When you go up to die
  Some not far distant day,
I wonder will you try
  To tear your mask away,
    And look life in the eyes
    For once without disguise?

Behind your mask may hide
  What treacherous, covered fires!
What hidden, torturing pride!
  What sorrows, what desires!
    Whatever there may be
    There will be none to see.

Yet I think when you meet
  Death coming through the skies,
Calmly his face you'll greet,
  Coldly, without surprise;
    Then die without a moan,
    Still masked although alone.

THE MASQUERADER

You were no more to me than many others,
I never thought you beautiful or bright,
And yet I find your memory returning
Many a night.

Again I hear your strange, heart-broken laughter,
Laughter more pitiful than any tears;
Again I see your gallant head uplifted
Through heavy years.

You held so tight the fragile toy you wanted,
And when it broke you would not let it go;
You would not let us guess your heart broke with it—
You played you did not know.

Now you are gone we see how well you suffered,
We see the valiant way you struggled on.
Can you forgive our foolish condescension,
Now you are gone?

THE MORNING SHADOW

I who have never known sorrow
Wait for it morning and evening;
For the footstep of grief on my threshold,
The drip of tears on my hearthstone,
The pitiless hours of lonely, uncomforted woe.

Never a life without sorrow!
But, oh, when will mine be upon me?
When will the years seem long
That now slip happily by me?
The light of the skies be dimmed
To eyes that are weary with weeping?

AFTER GRIEVING

When I was young I was so sad!
I was so sad! I did not know
Why any living thing was glad
When one must some day sorrow so.
But now that grief has come to me
My heart is like a bird set free.

I always knew that it would come;
I always felt it waiting there:
Its shadow kept my glad voice dumb
And crushed my gay soul with despair.
But now that I have lived with grief
I feel an exquisite relief.

Athletes who know their proven strength,
Ships that have shamed the hurricane:
These are my brothers, and at length
I shall come back to joy again.
However hard my life may be
I know it shall not conquer me.

SPRING SORROW

Sorrow to see the spring!
Why do we smile when she wakes the rose?
For sleep is sweeter as every one knows,
And cruel the wakening.

Hark to a weary sound!
It is the sap that swells like tears
In the heart of trees that are grey with years,
And falls like tears to the ground.

Futile the brave display,
The pitiful challenge of bud and leaf,
The proud pretence that is yet so brief
And dies, like spring, in a day.

Sorrow to see the spring!
Why are we glad at the birth of the rose?
For death is better as every one knows,
And life is a bitter thing.

AGE INVADING

I shall not run upstairs again,
And oh, the foolish grief I feel!
I must go carefully or pain
Will thrust me through with its bright steel.

I never thought that I should care
When the first shadow fell on me.
I planned lace caps for my white hair
And hoped to grow old gracefully.

I thought that when Age came I'd stand
(If Age should really come at all!)
And greet him with extended hand
As my last partner at a ball.

But now when you with easy grace
Run up ahead or wait for me,
Such bitterness is in my face
I turn my head lest you should see.

PORTRAIT OF AN OLD LADY

Early one morning as I went a-walking
I met an old lady so stately and tall,
The red of her cheeks gave a quiver of pleasure
Like the sight of red hollyhocks by a grey wall.

Fragrance of lavender clung to her, telling
Of linen piled high on immaculate shelves;
You could fancy her tending her garden or strolling
Among the proud roses that grow by themselves.

When I am sorrowful, dreading the future,
Dreaming of days when my hair shall be grey,
It cheers me to think of that lovely old lady,
Lavender-haunted and hollyhock-gay.

TO TWO LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR

Sweet and humble and gladly poor,
The Grace of God came in at my door.

Sorrow and death were mine that day,
But the Grace of God came in to stay;

The Grace of God that spread its wings
Over all sad and pitiful things.

Sorrow turned to the touch of God,
Death became but His welcoming nod.

Grey-eyed, comforting, strong and brave,
You came to ask but instead you gave.

Quickly you came and went, you two,
But the Grace of God stayed after you.

MOUNTAINS

Over the green and level land
  My sad eyes wander without hope;
Here no rejoicing mountains stand,
  No strong and friendly slope.

But ever when I close my eyes
  Tall mountains rear their stately forms.
Against the sky I watch them rise,
  Serene in calm or storms.

One in the distance rises blue,
  Haloed by morning's earliest beams.
This was the peak my childhood knew,
  About her clung my dreams.

Over her pallor fell the snow,
  The hot sun scorched her fertile breast,
But in the summer lightning's glow
  I always loved her best.

She bowed her purple head in pain
  As clouds rolled up from threatening space,
And let a veil of silver rain
  Slip down across her weeping face.

TO A LADY COMPLIMENTING

When I met you an hour ago
  My heart was heavy and chill;
Now, from your word of praise,
  It is glowing still.

Ah, *vanitas vanitatum!*
  What the Preacher said was true!
I always thought my eyes were grey
  But now I know they are blue.

GREEN GRAVEL

Fidelia goes sadly and sits in the door;
She spins or she stares at the white sanded floor.
She has never a visitor all the day long,
And she sings very softly this foolish old song:

"Green Gravel, Green Gravel, your grass is so green!
The sweetest, the sweetest that ever was seen!
Fidelia, Fidelia, your sweetheart is dead;
He sent you this letter to turn back your head."

But when it is evening she wanders away
And watches the children who come out to play.
The children are happy, they dance in a ring,
And over and over they merrily sing:

"Green Gravel, Green Gravel, your grass is so green!
The sweetest, the sweetest that ever was seen!"
She wants to sing with them and join in their fun
But when she comes near them away they all run.

So late in the evening she dances alone
And sings rather drearily round a white stone:
"*Fidelia, Fidelia, your sweetheart is dead;*
He sent you this letter to turn back your head."

THE WHITE MOTH

Where are you flying, White Moth, to-night,
  Bearing a pale little soul away,
A sad little soul that quivers with fright
  As the moonbeams over your frail wings play?

Peace! I conjure you, fly no more,
  Come no nearer the beckoning flame.
Wan little soul from an unknown shore,
  Not by chance to my light you came.

Somewhere I have known your silver wings,
  Somewhere I have thrilled to your lonely flight.
I am sad with the ache of forgotten things;
  Leave me alone in peace to-night.

HONEY-WITCH

Gay Peter rode by the grey tower
And a face leaned laughing down,
With hair that gleamed from a gold net
And eyes of angel-brown.
"She is fair," he said as he saw her,
"Tender and good and gay.
So pure that I am all unworthy,"
And sighing he rode away.

Gay Peter married a good maid
Because of her bold blue eyes,
But ever he dreamed of the lady
Pure as the frosty skies.
Everywhere he wandered
He thought of a heart-shaped face
Set like a star in a dark sky
As his soul's abiding place.

But up in her tower the lady
Bit her honey-coloured hands and cried:
"Shall I never get out of the grey tower?
Shall I never get out?" she sighed.

But no one guessed who passed there
That her goodness all was lies,
That she had the heart of a honey-witch
Behind her angel eyes.

TO A SILLY POOR SOUL

"If ever thou gavest meat or drink,
Every nighte and alle;
The fire shall never make thee shrink,
And Christe receive thy saule."

For meat and drink that you have given
God will find you a place in Heaven.

For the kind words that you have spoken
God will not let your soul be broken.

Bread on the waters you have cast
And God will save your soul at last.

Wherever you go—and the world is wide—
My prayers shall be ever at your side.

For I, perverse and foolish, too,
Know the dark ways your soul went through.

You who were given the greatest grace
Cast it away with a tortured face.

But if I see the good in you
Will God in His mercy not see it, too?

Will God not make you clean and whole
And Christ receive your silly poor soul?

MOONLIGHT

The moon reached in cold hands across the sill
And touched me as I lay sleeping;
And in my sleep I thought of sorrowful things:
I wakened, and I lay weeping.

I could hear on the beach below the small waves break
And fall on the silver shingle,
And the sound of a footstep passing in the street
Where lamplight and moonlight mingle.

And I said: "All day I can turn my face to the sun
And lead my thoughts to laughter;
But I hope in my heart that I never shall sleep again
Because of the pain thereafter."

The moon's pale fingers wandered across my face
And the arm where my hot cheek rested,
And because of the tears in my eyes I could not see
Where the black waves rocked moon-crested.

MY MIRROR

There is a mirror in my room
Less like a mirror than a tomb,
There are so many ghosts that pass
Across the surface of the glass.

When in the morning I arise
With circles round my tired eyes,
Seeking the glass to brush my hair
My mother's mother meets me there.

If in the middle of the day
I happen to go by that way,
I see a smile I used to know—
My mother, twenty years ago.

But when I rise by candlelight
To feed my baby in the night,
Then whitely in the glass I see
My dead child's face look out at me.

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